

specification describes multiple agency involvement in completion of the shell document, for example, at page 12, lines 17-26:

The employee then establishes a secure collaboration space within the relationship-management system 10 to enable collaboration among all the interested agencies, and posts the shell document in the collaboration space. The relationship-management system 10 then notifies all interested agencies.

During an ensuing collaboration period, employees of the interested agencies review and make changes to the shell document. If any of the interested agencies have issued a request-for-proposal (“RFP”), the RFP, and any response thereto, are posted in the collaboration space. The relationship-management system 10 notifies all interested parties of any new postings to the collaboration space, any changes to existing postings in the collaboration space, and any messages between interested parties. Specification at page 12, lines 17-26 (emphasis added).

This portion of the specification clearly describes that completion of the shell document involves actions of multiple agencies and, as such, provides support for completion of the shell document by both a first independent agency and a second independent agency. The description that the shell document may be used by any of the independent agencies once it is complete does not negate the description that completion of the shell document involves multiple independent agencies prior to its use.

For at least these reasons, applicants submit that the specification provides enabling disclosure of “after the shell document has been completed by both the first independent agency and the second independent agency, using at least one computer that includes a processor to identify service providers.” Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejections.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 13-15, 17-19, 21, 22 and 25-34 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Mahoney (U.S. Patent No. 5,563,991) in view of Guzelsu (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,587), Albazz (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0046081) and Official Notice, and claims 23 and 24 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Mahoney in view of Guzelsu, Albazz, Official Notice, and Kennedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,031,547). Based on the following remarks, withdrawal of the rejections and further examination are respectfully requested.

Referring to particular claim language, independent claim 13, recites a method comprising, among other things, after a shell document has been completed by both a first

independent agency and a second independent agency, using at least one computer that includes a processor to identify service providers that have been pre-qualified to provide services included in the completed shell document and post the completed shell document to home pages of the pre-qualified service providers that are separate from the secure collaboration space such that designated employees of the pre-qualified service providers perceive the completed shell document upon next logging into the relationship-management system.

Independent claims 32 and 33, although different in scope from claim 13 and each other, recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 13.

The applied references are not seen to disclose, teach or suggest the foregoing features recited by the independent claims. In particular, the Office Action indicates that Mahoney, Guzelsu, and Albazz fail to describe or suggest these features of the independent claims. Office Action at page 9. Instead, the Office Action relies on Official Notice for these features. Id. Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse the use of Official Notice taken in the Office Action. Specifically, applicants do not believe these features are of instant and unquestionable demonstration as being well-known, particularly in the context of the pending claims. Therefore, applicants respectfully request provision of a prior art reference, in the context of the pending claims, for these features. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 13, 32, and 33.

The other rejected claims in the application are each dependent on these independent claims and are thus believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each claim is deemed to define additional aspects of the disclosure, however, the individual consideration of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims)

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that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this reply should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this reply.

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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